What is claimed is:

1. A method for determining the deterioration of a battery,

    wherein charge and discharge cycles of the battery are measured by number and depth of the charge/discharge;

    a characteristic deterioration value is determined for each of the charge and discharge cycles on the basis of a deterioration curve that is characteristic of the specific battery type; and

    individual characteristic deterioration values are summed up to obtain the deterioration of the battery.

2. The method as recited in Claim 1,

    wherein each partial cycle of charging and each partial cycle of discharging is measured separately, the characteristic deterioration value being determined for each of the partial cycles, and the characteristic deterioration values for all partial cycles being summed up together.

3. The method as recited in Claim 1,

    wherein the dependence of the characteristic deterioration values on the depth of charge/discharge is permanently defined for the respective battery type by the deterioration curve as a continuous function.

4. The method as recited in Claim 1,

    wherein the dependence of the characteristic deterioration values on the depth of charge/discharge is permanently defined for the respective battery type by the deterioration curve of approximated intervals with a class width that is adapted to the respective battery type.

5. The method as recited in Claim 3 or 4,

    wherein the deterioration curve is, at least in individual sections, adapted to the conditions currently prevailing in the region of the battery using weighting factors.

6. The method as recited in Claim 5,

    wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the temperature.

7. The method as recited in Claim 5,

    wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the direction and intensity of the charge/discharge current.

8. The method as recited in Claim 6,

    wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the direction and intensity of the charge/discharge current.

9. The method as recited in Claim 2,

    wherein the dependence of the characteristic deterioration values on the depth of charge/discharge is permanently defined for the respective battery type by the deterioration curve as a continuous function.

10. The method as recited in Claim 2,

    wherein the dependence of the characteristic deterioration values on the depth of charge/discharge is permanently defined for the respective battery type by the deterioration curve of approximated intervals with a class width that is adapted to the respective battery type.

11. The method as recited in Claim 9 or 10,

    wherein the deterioration curve is, at least in individual sections, adapted to the conditions currently prevailing in the region of the battery using weighting factors.

12. The method as recited in Claim 11,
     wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the temperature.

13. The method as recited in Claim 11,
     wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the direction and intensity of the charge/discharge current.

14. The method as recited in Claim 12,
     wherein the weighting factors are dependent on the direction and intensity of the charge/discharge current.

15. The method as recited in Claim 1 or 2,
     wherein charge/discharge cycles with a capacity throughput below a predetermined limit are not taken into account.

16. The use of the method according to Claim 1 or 2 for a battery that is used in a motor vehicle for supplying electric power to electronic auxiliary components.

17. The use of the method according to Claim 1 or 2 for a battery that is used in a motor vehicle for supplying electric power to propulsion components.

18. The method as recited in Claim 3 or 4,
     wherein charge/discharge cycles with a capacity throughput below a predetermined limit are not taken into account.

19. The use of the method according to Claim 3 or 4 for a battery that is used in a motor vehicle for supplying electric power to electronic auxiliary components.

20. The use of the method according to Claim 3 or 4 for a battery that is used in a motor vehicle for supplying electric power to propulsion components.